



NEW VIEW NETWORK

VOL. 22, Issue #1

January, February, March 2012

The voice of **OPERATION: NEW VIEW COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY**
Published Quarterly. Serving the Iowa counties of Dubuque, Delaware and Jackson

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT AND FREE TAX PREPARATION

Again this year, Operation: New View Community Action Agency in collaboration with the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Outreach Task Force of Dubuque, Delaware, and Jackson Counties will be promoting the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to working families in the community along with other tax credits and the free tax preparation sites offered in the area.

EITC is a refundable federal tax credit that was enacted by Congress in 1975 that is available to working individuals and families with low to moderate incomes. This credit lowers the amount of tax owed, but is often refunded to the taxpayer. The amount of EITC depends on your income and individuals are encouraged to learn the advantage and qualifications of EITC. As many as 20-25% of individuals that qualify for EITC don't claim it! Don't fall into that percentage! Even if you are not required to file taxes you may still be eligible for EITC.



Our agency will also be coordinating Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites throughout our 3-county area. These sites prepare and electronically file tax returns at no cost. Additional information regarding EITC and free income tax filing sites can be found elsewhere in this edition of the **New View Network**.

AGENCY CELEBRATES 38 YEARS OF SERVICE

On February 8, 2012 Operation: New View Community Action Agency will celebrate 38 years of service. Since 1974, the agency has been helping people to help themselves in Dubuque, Delaware and Jackson counties. The agency was the successor to the old River Valley Community Action Program, which began in the mid-1960's.



The agency's operating philosophy comes from guidelines set forth in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 which states. "It is the policy of the United States to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this nation by opening to everyone the opportunity to live in decency and dignity."

As a result much of the agency's work involves meeting immediate needs, advocating on behalf of the people it serves and provides direct assistance as well as referrals to other community resources to meet needs.

THE PROMISE OF COMMUNITY ACTION

Community Action changes people's lives.
Embodies the spirit of hope,
Improves communities,
And makes America a better place to live.
We care about the entire community
and we are dedicated to helping people
help themselves and each other.

2012 BOARD OFFICERS ELECTED

At their meeting on January 19th, the Board of Directors of Operation: New View Community Action Agency elected board officers to serve for the 2012 calendar year.

Wayne Demmer of Epworth, who represents the Dubuque County Board of Supervisors, was elected to serve as Board Chair.

Sue Voelker of Manchester, who represents the Manchester Area Chamber of Commerce, was elected to serve as Board Vice Chair.

Larry "Buck" Koos of LaMotte, who represents the Jackson County Board of Supervisors, was elected to serve as Board Treasurer/Secretary.

Congratulations to our newly elected officers and thanks go out to them for providing leadership to our agency.



THERE IS A SANTA!



A big "THANK YOU" to our area communities for their generous support in making Christmas brighter for area needy families. The agency received \$10,461.98 of in-kind support in the form of gifts, toys, donations and gift cards. \$17,203.43 in cash donations were received. We served 351 households and 890 individuals. There certainly was a Santa Claus in Dubuque, Delaware and Jackson counties! Thanks to all who contributed to the cause. A special thanks goes to the Dubuque Telegraph Herald for their continued and outstanding support of the Santa's Helper Program.

KWIK KARE PROGRAM DONATIONS TO AGENCY

During the month of January, the Kwik Kare Program, sponsored by Rainbo Oil Company and Kwik Stop Stores and Dairy Queens, will be designating all contributions they receive to the work of our agency. Along with radio advertising there will be donation canisters located at the 8 Kwik Stops and Dairy Queens in the Dubuque area.

In addition, donation canisters will also be made available and our agency highlighted at Dubuque Fighting Saints hockey games on Saturday, February 4th and Saturday, March 31st.



DONATION TO PROVIDE MEDICAL NEEDS

Again this year, our agency has received a \$10,000 donation from the Green Family foundation to be used to assist local low-income families with emergency medical needs that they cannot afford.

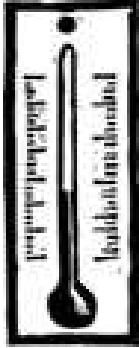


The Green Family members are former Dubuque residents who now live in California. This generous gift was given by the family to serve needs in their former home community. We are very grateful to the Green Family for this thoughtful and much needed donation.

Over the past seven years, the Green's donations have totaled \$84,000 and assisted over 700 local people with medical needs such as dental care, prescription drugs and emergency procedures.



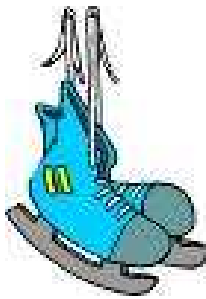
KEEP OUR NEIGHBORS WARM FUND NEEDS SUPPORT



Our agency's "Keep Our Neighbors Warm Fund" continues to accept donations and grow in its ability to supplement heating assistance funds for low-income families this winter. This much needed funding has been generously provided by individuals, organizations, businesses and special projects.

The fund was established by the Board of Directors of Operation: New View Community Action Agency in response to drastic energy bills and flat funding by the federal government. Donations may be sent to any of our agency's outreach offices in Dubuque, Delaware and Jackson counties. Be sure to write "Keep Our Neighbors Warm" on checks.

Donations are particularly needed this year due to the drastic reduction in heating assistance funds by the federal government.

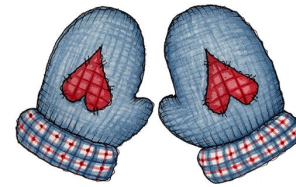


POVERTY SIMULATION PROGRAM RENEWED

On Sunday, December 11, 2011, Operation: New View Community Action Agency partnered with St. Joseph the Worker and St. Anthony Parish in Dubuque to host a Poverty Simulation for their Confirmation Groups. Poverty simulations address different issues of poverty and low-income families. This experience is designed to help participants gain a better understanding of the typical life of a family experiencing poverty.

A total of 52 students participated in the simulation at St. Joseph the Worker and 18 parents volunteered. We want to thank St. Joseph the Worker and St. Anthony Parishes for making this simulation possible for their Confirmation Groups.

Any group interested in conducting a Poverty Simulation should contact Becky Jenkins at bjenkins@operationnewview.org or 563.556.5130 extension 14.



DUBUQUE MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY

DUBUQUE MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY
OCTOBER 22, 2011



The 2011 Dubuque Make A Difference Day took place on Saturday, October 22nd. Some 312 volunteers organized into 44 teams delivered home improvements to 66 homes of elderly, disabled and low-income families. The services included

weatherization as well as numerous other chores. Our thanks to agency board member **Laura Roussel** and to agency staff members **Mike Strader**, **Becky Jenkins**, **Teresa Smith** and **Tom Stovall** for their roles in this project's success.



Good friends are like stars ...
You don't always see them,
but you know they are always there!

MAQUOKETA WEATHERIZATION CHALLENGE RESULTS

The Maquoketa Weatherization Challenge took place on Saturday, October 29th. A total of 65 volunteers organized into 7 teams, weatherized 15 homes of elderly, disabled and low-income families. Special thanks to agency board member **Kathy Kunde** and **Karen Breitbach** and to agency staff member **Emilie Daniels** for their leadership to this successful event.



2011 YEARS OF SERVICE MILESTONE!

Our agency would like to offer "Congratulations" and "Thank You" to all of our staff that celebrated years of service milestones during 2011. This group represents over 200 years of dedicated service to our agency and the people we serve.

25 Years (1986)

Gloria Kolbet Head Start Teacher, Manchester 1 (1/16/86)

Jim O'Toole, Energy Assistance & Community Service Program Manager (8/02/86)

20 Years (1991)

Sandy Wagar, Dubuque County Outreach Worker (2/01/91)

Donna Weaver, Head Start Cook, Manchester 2 (4/16/91)

Barb Slater, Head Start Teacher Associate, Dyersville (5/28/91)

Brenda Pregler, Full Charge Bookkeeper, Central Office (6/19/91)

Sue De Moss, Head Start Teacher, Maquoketa 1 (7/24/91)

10 Years (2001)

Laura Miller, Head Start Cook, Manchester 1 (1/11/01)

Stacy Weires, Dubuque County Outreach Worker (9/10/01)

5 Years (2006)

Robin Klima, CACFP Program Assistant, Dyersville (2/13/06)

Renee Gerardy, Head Start Teacher Associate, Maquoketa 2 (2/13/06)

Tanya Davis, Head Start Team Coordinator, Central Office (3/20/06)

Betsy Wiebke, Head Start Program Specialist, Central Office (3/20/06)

Claudia Williams, Head Start Cook, St. John Center, Dubuque (5/02/06)

Amy Perry, Head Start Teacher, St. John 2, Dubuque (5/02/06)



WEATHERIZATION

Low Cost Way to Shrink Your Utility Bill

Close the darn door! When using your entry door 'do not stand with the door open, but close it as soon as possible.' This could save you as much as \$50-80 per year in heating costs!

Fix That Dripping Faucet. A faucet dripping at 40 drops per minute will cost you \$30 to \$50 a year. Most drips are on the hot water side of your faucet and cheap and easy to fix.

Stop Messing With the Thermostat. Turning the thermostat warmer and then turning it way down wastes fuel. Turn up your thermostat slightly when home, down slightly at night and when you're not there.

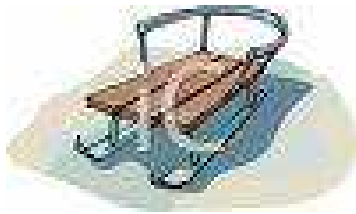
Turn Off The Lights. When not in use turn off lights and other energy vampires. Unplug the cell phone charger! All chargers should be turned off when not in use (you know, flashlight, cordless drill, video games).

Completions for 1st Quarter:

Dubuque - 20
Delaware - 2
Jackson - 3

Mike Strader

Weatherization Program Manager



HEAD START



As I write this article the teaching staff and children are back from winter break and classes have resumed. Since the last newsletter, we had another successful Dental Day at the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA). Dr. Bret Kilburg volunteered his time to do dental exams on 101 children. Jacquie Zwack, Trish Kemp, and Laura Clemen provided the children with a fluoride varnish application. Lead Testing was also done on children that had not had the testing prior to attending Head Start. A big thank you to Dr. Kilburg, VNA staff, and our Health Coordinator, Mary Bartalotta for making this day happen!!

Our fiscal year for 2010-2011 ended on October 31st. Due to everyone's hard work, we met our in-kind

(non-federal) match for the year. Our Head Start grant is for \$1,734,673. Our program's required non federal match totals \$440,651, which breaks down to our program being required to match \$1.00 to every \$4.00 that we are given. We earn the non federal match through volunteer time and cash/material donations to our program. Through very hard work by our center staff and people that live in the communities we serve, we accomplished our goal! Thank you to all.

As we start 2012, the months ahead will be busy. Along with the day-to-day operations of our program we have training and board meetings coming up, which will fill in a large portion of our January calendar. In February, we will have Federal reviewers coming. February is also the month we set things in motion as far as recruiting for the 2012-2013 enrollment year. We, also, begin our yearly self-assessment process. Each month brings with its own agenda and at times the months come up way to fast.



Lastly, we are still taking applications for this program year and our big focus is in the Dyersville area. Families do not have to live in Dyersville per se to have their child attend that center. If you know of any families that have preschool age children, please tell them about Head Start. It is very important that we increase the enrollment numbers in this area.

All of us in the Head Start Program wish everyone a safe and healthy 2012!

Peggy Hanniford

Early Childhood Programs Director



SPECIAL PROJECTS

FREE TAX PREPARATION

Its tax time again! This year individuals have until Tuesday, April 17th to file their federal income tax return, due to Emancipation Day. Illinois and Wisconsin returns will also be due April 17th while Iowa residents have until Monday, April 30th to file their state returns.



Operation: New View Community Action Agency will be hosting Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites again this year. Listed

below are the dates, times, and hours for each of the counties:

**Operation: New View Community Action Agency
1473 Central Avenue, Dubuque**

- Starting January 26 through April 12
- Mondays & Thursdays from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.
- Call 563/556-5130 ext. 14 for an appointment

**Operation: New View Community Action Agency
721 South 5th Street, Suite B, Manchester**

- Saturdays, February 4th & 18th
- Saturday, March 3rd
- 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Call 563/927-4629 for an appointment

**Operation: New View Community Action Agency
904 East Quarry, Maquoketa**

- Saturdays, February 11th & 25th
- Saturday, March 10th
- 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Call 563/652-5197 for an appointment

Individuals wanting to get their taxes prepared for free at any VITA Site should bring all of the following information with them:

- ✗ Valid picture ID.
- ✗ Social Security Cards for you and each member of your family included on your return.

- ✗ Birthdates for you and each member on your return.
- ✗ W-2s for all jobs in 2011 and any other tax related documents; 1099 forms for other income, if any.
- ✗ A copy of last year's tax returns (federal and State).
- ✗ If you are claiming childcare expenses, bring documentation of expenses and either the childcare agency's ID or the provider's Social Security number.
- ✗ All adults on your return must be present to sign forms.
- ✗ A blank check if you want your refund direct deposited.

If Operation: New View's times don't work for you, there are other VITA Sites in the area. Listed below are other locations where you can get your taxes prepared for free:

**Hills & Dales Lifetime Center, 3505 Stoneman Rd.,
Dubuque**

- Starting February 1st through April 15th
- Appointments only
- Call 563/585-0560 for appointment

Loras College, 1450 Alta Vista, Dubuque

- February 20th through March 26th
- Mondays only starting at 2:00 p.m.
- Appointments only
- Call 563/588-7695 for appointment

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church, 1780 White,
Dubuque**

- Starting February 1st through April 15th
- Monday - Friday, 12:30 to 4:00 p.m.
- Walk-ins only

**University of Dubuque, 2000 University Ave.,
Dubuque**

- Tuesday, February 7th, 4:00 - 8:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, February 8th, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- Appointments only
- Call 563/556-5130 ext 14 for appointment

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

Operation: New View Community Action Agency continues as the lead agency for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Outreach Task Force of Dubuque, Delaware and Jackson Counties. EITC is a refundable federal tax credit that was enacted by Congress in 1975 that is available to working individuals and families with low to moderate incomes. This credit lowers the amount of tax owed, but is often refunded to the taxpayer. The amount of EITC depends on your income and individuals are encouraged to stop by and learn the advantage and qualifications of EITC.

As many as 20-25% of individuals that qualify for EITC don't claim it! Don't fall into that percentage! Even if you are not required to file taxes you may still be eligible for EITC.

FINANCIAL LITERACY CLASSES

The time has come again for Operation: New View Community Action Agency, along with Alliant Credit Union and Health Services Credit Union to offer another round of **free** financial education classes to the community. These classes are divided into four sessions based on the **Four Cornerstones of Financial Literacy**. The first session will start on Monday, January 23, 2012. The classes will be held at the Prescott Community Center, 1151 White Street in Dubuque. The description and date for each session is listed below:

Monday, January 23, 2012

6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Budgeting to Create Savings

Monday, January 30, 2012

6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Debt Reduction and Asset Building

Monday, February 6, 2012

6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Building a Good Credit Rating

Monday, February 13, 2012

6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Consumer Protection and Financial Institutions

We encourage individuals to attend all sessions to continue building their financial knowledge. Please RSVP your attendance by Friday, January 20, 2012.

We are able to tailor the materials to meet the needs of your group or organization. If you are interested in hosting a free financial literacy class, please contact me.

**POVERTY SIMULATION RETURNS**

Operation: New View is now the proud owner of a Poverty Simulation Kit, thanks to a partnership between Operation: New View and Building Directions for Families. Poverty simulations address different issues of poverty and low-income families. This experience is designed to help participants gain a better understanding of the typical life of a family experiencing poverty.

The simulation offers a brief glance into the struggles low-income families face each month. The simulation is broken into four, 15 minute weeks. The first week seems to be a challenge for most participants as they try to figure out what needs to be accomplished first and how to reach their goals for that week. A debriefing is conducted after the simulation so participants and volunteers can share their experiences and emotions during the month.

If anyone is interested in volunteering in any upcoming simulation, please contact bjenkins@operationnewview.org or 563/556-5130 extension 14.

Becky Jenkins

Special Projects Coordinator



DELAWARE OUTREACH

Christmas is over and we are very grateful for the generosity in the community; the gifts that help us help others. The churches in the area outdid themselves this year. A businessman in the area gave a sizable donation and made Christmas very Merry for several households. The Lambert Elementary students and faculty really did a terrific job with their gifts of hats and gloves and hygiene products this year. We are really stocked up now with those items.

Thank You

January 1st and we still have had no nasty winter weather to speak of. The above normal temperatures have been great. But change is inevitable in everything, especially Iowa weather. Some say we will pay for this nice weather later, but every day of warm December/January weather is one day closer to spring. When winter does hit, I hope it is not like the January 31 - February 2, 2011, winter storm. That storm, referred to as the "2011 Groundhog Day Blizzard" was a powerful and historic winter storm, according to Wikipedia. An ice storm ahead of the blizzard brought hazardous conditions and many areas saw well over 1 inch of ice accumulation in much of the Midwest. This caused many power outages, cancellations, road closures, and mail stoppages both before and after the storm. Southeastern Iowa had up to 18.5 inches of snow. The heaviest snow fell in the eastern half of the state. Des Moines fared slightly better, where only 6.5 inches fell. Over the course of the storm, state troopers responded to 151 accidents and assisted 428 motorists.



Despite the storm last year, we were busy at work in Delaware County during January, February, and March 2011. During these 3 months we did 138 LIHEAP applications and worked with 35 families in collaboration with other agencies to help with utility bills, 16 emergency Childcare applications were completed as well as 15 Head Start applications. 22

families utilized the hygiene program and we referred 61 families to the food pantry. We also helped families with the Green Family Fund, Alliant Hometown, and the Emergency Assistance Fund.

As 2012 begins, we anticipate similar activity in our programs and another busy year. At this time we are behind about 48 LIHEAP applications compared to the same time frame last year. As we look for the people we might have missed we find some folks have passed away, and some have moved, and happily some are over income. An increase in family income is a change in the right direction. Hopefully it shows progress in economic recovery. But we still have a long way to go. We plan on being here for whatever changes happen in the weather, the economy, and life.

Sheila Freiburger

Delaware County Outreach Center Coordinator



DUBUQUE COUNTY OUTREACH

During the months of October, November, and December client advocacy was provided to 229 households, housing advocacy to 123 households, and we had 57 SHARES purchased. The



"Coats for Kids" project was a great success. We distributed 759 coats. Very special and warm thank you goes to DUPACO Credit Union for collecting all the coats and Courtesy Dry Cleaners for cleaning the coats, KCRG-TV for delivering and St. John's Lutheran Church for providing the space to distribute these coats. Without these partners we would not be able to provide coats for children that need them.

Again this year Dubuque County Outreach had a successful year with our Santa's Helper Program. We helped 529 individuals and 211 households. In addition to this number we also helped out *Toys for Tots* by distributing toys to another 72 households and 213 individuals. A grand total of 283 households and 742 individuals. These additional families didn't sign up at any other agency and needed help at Christmas. A big "Thank You" to Liz Koppes, for all her hard work during the Christmas season. A special "THANK YOU" to Erik Hogstrom and the Telegraph Herald Newspaper and all of our donors for all their assistance with this project each year.



During the months of January, February and March, Outreach will continue to take fuel applications. People are calling for help with their rent rebate forms or calling to request the form. Outreach will be taking applications at St. Mary's Apartments on February 2, '2012.

Mary Billmeyer

LIHEAP and Community Services Program Assistant



JACKSON COUNTY OUTREACH

During the months of November and December 837 households applied for fuel assistance; along with 136 households having advocacy work done for them with their utility vendors; as well as fuel vendors to maintain heating services. Budget counseling was also provided for 841 households due to increased fuel costs. It was noticed that we also had quite a few new households apply for heating assistance.

Fifty-eight households were assisted through the Telegraph Herald's Santa's Helper Project; making a brighter Christmas for them this year. Santa and the elves at the Operation: New View office in Jackson County were a little worried for awhile but donations of clothing, food, household and personal care items and toys started to appear during the week just before Christmas. The donations made it possible to fill most of the requests. It was once again heartwarming to know that a lot of people help people that they would never know or meet. An especially large 'THANK YOU' is extended from our office to the Dubuque Telegraph Herald Newspaper for all of their assistance with this project each year along with all of our donors.



In-kind for the months of November, October and December totaled \$11,106.60 including both donated time by volunteers aiding our office and material donations.

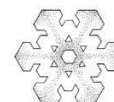


Thirty-seven referrals were made to other agencies, assisting clients in obtaining needed services, along with 1,746 units of information concerning our and other agency programs were also made available for client use. Ninety-seven households were assisted with nutritional items.

The staff at the Jackson County Outreach office wishes each and everyone of you a safe and HAPPY NEW YEAR and again THANK YOU for any assistance that you may have given our office. We are truly grateful for your partnership with us to provide much needed services to low-income individuals in Jackson County.

Emilie Daniels

Jackson County Outreach Center Coordinator



ENERGY ASSISTANCE



After a long battle, the federal budget has been finalized. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program took a considerable cut. Last year, the program was funded at

\$4.701 billion. This year it was cut almost 25% down to \$3.478 billion. What this means is that households that are approved for the program will receive less money to go towards their winter heating costs. Thankfully the winter has been fairly mild so far, helping keep heating cost down. But as we all know, things can change in a hurry. A cold spell can arrive at any time, making all our furnaces stay on more and therefore use more energy to heat our homes.

Looking back on federal funding for the Energy Assistance Program the last 4 years:

	<u>National Amt.</u>	<u>Iowa's Amt</u>
2009	\$5.100 billion	\$76,929,443.00
2010	\$5.100 billion	\$72,111,801.00
2011	\$4.701 billion	\$71,588,956.00
2012	\$3.478 billion	\$54,812,000.00

With the mild temperatures so far this winter this also means a lower number of applications being taken for the Energy Assistance Program in our three county area. As of the end of December, our agency is down 285 applications from last year. The following is a breakdown of the number of applications taken and approved through December 31st.

	<u>Taken</u>	<u>Approved</u>	<u>Paid</u>
Delaware Co.	606	567	\$ 184,375
Jackson Co.	864	817	\$ 267,025
Dubuque Co.	<u>2,561</u>	<u>2,381</u>	<u>\$ 662,950</u>
TOTALS	4,031	3,765	\$1,114,350

Applications will be taken until April 30th this year. And since the original award level was set lower than usual for approved applications this fiscal year before

the Federal appropriation was known, it is possible that we will do a supplemental payment sometime this spring for all approved applications. More on this in the next newsletter.

Jim O'Toole

LIHEAP & Community Services Program Manager



GREAT TRUTHS ABOUT GROWING OLD:

Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.

Forget the health food. I need all the preservatives I can get.

When you fall down, you wonder what else you can do while you're down there.

You're getting old when you get the same sensation from a rocking chair that you once got from a roller coaster.

It's frustrating when you know all the answers, but nobody bothers to ask you the questions.

Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician.

Wisdom comes with age, but sometimes age comes alone.

